Workplace innovation and social innovation: monitoring and policy in the Netherlands
Content of my presentation

• Workplace innovation and social innovation on the agenda of policy makers in the Netherlands

• Definitions

• Research findings on workplace innovation / social innovation of the TNO survey NEWS (Netherlands Employers Work Survey)

• Conclusion
Ten years of Dutch Social innovation: social partners and social sciences

The facts

- The Innovation Platform: to counter the ‘innovation paradox’ (2003-2010)
- European initiatives applied in the NL: EFRO, ESF, SSH (after 2007)
- Innovation and the top-sectors (since 2011)

Important trigger:

“Innovation success is explained for 75% by social innovation and for 25% by R&D investments”

(Erasmus Competition & Innovation Monitor)
The discussions

> The tension between social scientists and social partners
> Preconditions for success with SI: have they been met?
> Social innovation and the relationship with Innovation

Policy development so far:

1] Shift from labour productivity to labour relations to sustainable employment;
2] Shift from technological innovation to social / workplace innovation to New World of Work;
3] Combining productivity and innovation, yet solid link with organisational innovation/division of labour (productivity & quality of work) is still lacking
4] No coherent programme on workplace innovation in the Netherlands
Definitions

Workplace innovations are strategically induced and participatory adopted changes in an organisation’s practice of managing, organising and deploying human and non-human resources that lead to simultaneously improved organisational performance and improved quality of working life (EU OSHA, forthcoming).

Social Innovation is dynamic management, flexible ways of organizing, modern employment relations, external collaboration in order to improve competitiveness and productivity (Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam).

Social Innovation is an organisation’s strategic choice to deploy the talents and competencies of the organisation’s employees (Dhondt, inaugural address, 2012)
Basic idea of these definitions: TOP model

**INPUTS**
- Measurements,
- Interventions,
- Activities,
- Investments,
- Etcetera...

**THROUGHPUT**
- Innovative capability

**OUTPUTS**
- Productivity / Performance
- Quality of Work

Source: Dortmund Declaration, May 2012
NEWS2010 data & method

- NEWS: Netherlands Employers Work Survey: two-yearly survey based on cross-sectional sample of Dutch organisations (‘establishments’)
- N=5,387 cases (‘establishments’)
- Subsample: >20 employees, no missing values: N=2,162 cases
- Logistic and multiple regression analyses
- Controlled for sector, company size, educational level
- Data collection: end of 2010
Workplace Innovation in the NEWS2010 dataset

1. Innovative organisational measures present
   - shop floor autonomy
   - self-managing teams
   - internal flexibilisation (e.g., flexible working times, functional flexibilisation, self rostering)

2. Innovations realised with potential organisational consequences
   - new combinations on organizing/renewal of work process, and/or improvement of work process; marketing method / organizational change introduced

3. Flexible buffer
   - number of temporary workers, flexible contracts, hired self employed

4. ICT
   - as communication technology vs. as automation strategy
Percentage of organisations (>20 employees) active with 3 to 4 out of 4 workplace innovation measures (source: NEWS 2010)

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Construction
- Trade
- Hotel/Catering
- Transport/Communication
- Financial Services
- Commerce
- Public Sector
- Education
- Healthcare/Well-being
- Services other
- Total

Not significant: agriculture, transport/communication, public sector, service other
Effect measurements (self reports)

› prevalence of workstress risk

› realised innovations of new products / services (past 2 years)

› satisfaction with employees’ commitment (according to respondent)

› skills obsolescence

› relative labour productivity (compared to competitors)

› change (decrease/increase) of quantitative performance (labour productivity, turnover, profit)

› change (decrease/increase) of qualitative performance (quality of products, satisfaction of clients)
Regression models

[not for publication]
Conclusion from the analyses

1. WPI has an effect of realised innovations, labour productivity and performance

2. WPI has relevance for commitment and for skills

3. Effect sizes are small to moderate, but in the expected directions

4. Only large flexible buffers have a positive affect on performance but a negative effect on commitment

(another study on NEWS2008 data indicates a strong effect on added value (objective measure) by internal flexibility compared to external flexibility)

5. Prevalence of workstress risks is associated with ICT (???)
Concluding remarks

It seems that workplace innovation has a positive effect on productivity and performance, but….

- Research on Workplace innovation needs:
  - unification concerning theory and constructs
  - external effect measures (e.g., productivity statistics)
  - to establish empirical evidence in having positive effect on productivity and quality of work

- Policy on workplace innovation
  - Should be linked with (national and European) innovation policies in general (linking with EU-social innovation)
  - must be regarded as a condition for successful (technological and economic) innovation
  - must see workplace innovation as a characteristic of organisations instead of as a characteristic of persons and a human ability to cope with unhealthy, unsafe and uninspiring working conditions
General information TNO please visit: www.tno.nl (also in English)

Some international publications:


Dortmund/Brussels Position Paper on ‘Workplace Innovation why do we need it?’ (2012) undersigned by more than 20 European Research/Knowledge institutes can be found at: